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Remarks of General Walter B. Smith
and his answers to questions concerning
CAREER SERVICE IN CIA

at the 8th Agency Orientation Course, 21 November 1952

General Smith: I have found that there are always a number of questions which our people would like to ask, not only in connection with the over-all business of the Agency, but in connection with their personal careers. Please have no hesitation in asking anything which may occur to you. If I cannot myself answer your questions from the platform, I will see that you get them answered by someone who is possibly more competent and more familiar with the details than I. I want to remind you that the service of national intelligence and of national security has become a permanent, honorable career. It is in effect a fourth service as compared with the three military services, and its operation will be continuous and accelerated in time of war, under its own command and under its own organization. Since the passage of the National Security Act, intelligence is able to offer you permanent, secure and honorable careers and it is to your credit and to our advantage that you have accepted that career earnestly and seriously. I do not think that many of you will ever feel that you have made a mistake.

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Question: Regarding the stability of the Agency, will the change in the Administration have any effect on the Agency, and what would happen to us in time of hot war?

General Smith: Since this is a statutory Agency supported by a career service, there will be no change with changes in the Administration. The Director and his principal Deputies and Assistants are non-political appointees and, while the Director himself must undoubtedly be a man whom the Chief Executive is willing to accept, and to whom he will give a certain measure of confidence, it is unlikely that you will ever have a Director whose status will change with changes in the Administration. As a statutory organization established to service the National Government, there is no possibility of change that I can anticipate over the long view; nor is there any in wartime, except that, in theatres of active operations - that is where shooting is going on - our personnel under the senior representative present

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would automatically report to and carry out the orders of the senior military commander in the theatre of operations, just as they are now doing in Korea. There the military requirement of winning the campaign or winning the war is paramount and everything else is subordinate to that. However, our personnel in an active theatre of operations would have other responsibilities. They would have missions targeted outside but based on a military theatre of operations. Those missions would be transmitted to them from headquarters with the concurrence and knowledge of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and they would be supported by the Theatre Commander concerned.

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Question: Are the Senior Representatives overseas your alter egos?

General Smith: Yes. With relation to myself or to any future Director, they occupy the same position that the commander of a theatre of operations, in a military sense, would occupy with respect to the military heads in Washington.

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Question: What do you think about the policy of rotation of individuals in key spots, in keeping with the career concept?

General Smith: Well, since I've ordered it and pressed it, I'm obviously in favor of it. I would like to amplify that a little bit. In the first place, one cannot conduct global operations, as we conduct them, exclusively and entirely controlled by a desk in Washington. In the second place, our people in the field believe, and unfortunately in some cases they've had grounds to feel, that the men who are telling them what to do have never been on the sharp end of the stick. There is a third and very impelling reason. An Agency of this kind, like a military agency, is extremely ill-advised if it keeps its best talent at home. It should get the best people that it can - get the most experienced people that it has - the most reliable people that it has - out to the point of impact. Thus, when you issue an order to a man in the field, knowing him, knowing his capability and his reliability, you have every assurance that it will be properly carried out and that the duty will be well performed. Accordingly, it is desirable to get the people we have here occupying key positions, who have demonstrated their fitness for trust and competence, as rapidly as possible to the critical places outside of the United States which are the key to our effective operations.

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